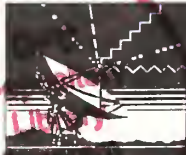


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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2707

March 31, 1995

GLICKMAN CONFIRMED AS NEW AGRICULTURE SECRETARY -- Dan Glickman was confirmed by the Senate to be the next Secretary of Agriculture and then sworn in at the Department of Agriculture by then Acting Secretary Richard Rominger. Nominated on December 28 to be the 26th Secretary of Agriculture by President Clinton, Glickman had previously served for 18 years as a Representative in the U.S. House for the state of Kansas. In his confirmation hearings, Glickman said he would place a high priority on the upcoming farm bill, the continuing reorganization of the Department, and "fair play" in the implementation of conservation programs. **Contact: Jim Petterson (202)720-4623.**

USDA STEAMS UP FOR TRIAL TESTS -- A trial run on a steam process to remove contamination from meat carcasses in slaughter plants was approved by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. The patented steam vacuum process involves a hot water spray that's maintained at 180 degrees Fahrenheit. The water is sprayed on to a carcass, which kills some bacteria and loosens contamination and then the water is vacuumed off. Bacterial samples will be collected at sites of both vacuuming and trimming procedures to compare the effectiveness of both methods. **Contact: Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113.**

TIGHTENED SECURITY IS NEEDED AT CHICKEN COOPS -- Increased biosecurity and disease surveillance procedures are being called for by the Department of Agriculture to prevent the highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreak in Mexico from crossing the border. The recently formed USDA Avian Influenza Working Group has recommended the immediate reporting of any flocks with clinical signs of the influenza to state and federal personnel. They also suggest increased blood sampling and hen monitoring of commercial flocks. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 734-6573.**

WHAT DO YOU EAT, AMERICA? That's the question interviewers will be asking some 6,000 Americans, from young children to the elderly. The survey takes about thirty minutes and the information will be used for many purposes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will use the information for evaluating nutrition programs, predicting demand of agricultural products, assessing how diets are changing and determining how well Americans are using and understanding nutrition labels. **Contact: Dianne Odland (301) 344-2111.**

POTATO GENES DON'T POSE A RISK -- A line of genetically engineered russet potatoes will not be regulated by the Department of Agriculture. Determining that the seven Russet Burbank potato lines of the Monsanto Company don't pose a plant pest risk, USDA won't regulate them anymore. The potatoes were engineered for resistance to the Colorado potato beetle, the predominant insect pest of U.S. potatoes. **Contact: Cynthia A. Eck (301) 734-5931.**

SPECIAL FOODS NEED SPECIAL CARE -- Whether you're eating, cooking or handling special foods this holiday, you should pay special attention to their handling needs. USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline is open to answer your questions about your Easter or Passover foods. Acting Director of the hotline, Bessie Berry, has some tips for safe food handling this holiday season. Be sure to store uncooked lamb, beef and pork in the refrigerator for only three to five days. Uncooked poultry, fish and liver will only stay safe for one or two days. Meat should be roasted at no lower than 325 degrees F. If you purchase pre-cooked foods, make sure the food is hot when you purchase it, and either refrigerate or eat it immediately. Cold foods should be refrigerated within two hours. **For more information about food safety, contact USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.**

A LIST FOR THE ORGANICALLY GROWN -- If you have any suggestions for substances that should be included on the Department of Agriculture's National List section of the National Organic Program, USDA would like to hear them. USDA will be accepting recommendations of possible substances for inclusion in the list until May 29. This list would include approved synthetic and prohibited natural substances and information about the environmental impact of either their production or use. **Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.**

USDA TOUGHENING LICENSE RENEWALS -- Renewing an animal welfare license will now depend on compliance with animal welfare regulations. The Department of Agriculture is amending its regulations to require animal dealers, exhibitors and operators of auction sales to certify that they are in compliance with animal welfare regulations before they can apply for a license renewal. But USDA will make recordkeeping easier by allowing a variance for a computerized recordkeeping system. **Contact: Cynthia Eck (301) 734-5931.**

NAFTA COMPLIANCE CHANGES THE WAY CATTLE ARE IMPORTED -- In order to comply with provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), duties and bonds on cattle imported from Mexico have been discontinued. This primarily affects cattle imported from Mexico into the United States for feeding and returned to Mexico for slaughter. USDA officials predict that with the new rule in effect, the possible dissemination of animal disease by cattle remaining in the United States in violation of the regulations would be eliminated. Comments on the proposal will be accepted until May 15. **Contact: Cynthia Eck (301) 734-5931.**

A GRAND OPENING IN TEXAS -- A new plant inspection station opened in Los Indios, Texas. The Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service opened its fifteenth station in the United States to help prevent plants carrying pests and diseases from entering the United States. Each year, around 460 million plants are inspected at these stations around the country. **Contact: Anne Sutton (301) 734-7255.**

WEEDING OUT NOXIOUS WEEDS -- Two weeds would be added to the list of the Department of Agriculture's noxious weeds if the Department's proposal is approved. Tropical soda apple and duck lettuce (known as *Solanum viarum* and *Ottelia alismoides*, respectively), would be added to the list. Tropical soda apple causes reduction in usable cattle forage and poses a significant threat to the cattle industry. The aquatic weed known as duck lettuce threatens the natural ecosystems of the United States. USDA is also proposing to expand the Federal Seed Act to include the seeds of all the noxious weeds listed in the Federal Noxious Weed regulations. If you'd like to comment on either of these proposals, you must do so by April 24. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 734-33256.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1974 -- A safer haven for youngsters at risk is the topic of this week's Agriculture USA. Gary Crawford travels to low income housing projects in inner cities to find out about a unique after-school activity program designed to protect and enrich these children. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary). ****Note to broadcasters: Beginning with programs aired the week of April 17, Agriculture USA will switch to a shorter, five minute format.**

CONSUMER TIME # 1453 -- A new food safety tool for poultry processors. A new look at snowflakes. The "Dust Bowl" revisited. Steam cleaning the beef. Egg safety. (Weekly cassette -- consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1965 -- Snowflake predictions. The new farm bill and dairy. Controlling the sugar beet maggot. A standing invitation to disease. Fencing in cows could bring more profit. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWS LINE -- Monday, April 10, world supply and demand for cotton. Tuesday, April 11, world ag supply and demand; cotton and wool outlook; crop production; world cotton; weekly weather and crops. Wednesday, April 12, world ag production; world grains trade; world oilseeds trade. Thursday, April 13, hog outlook. Friday, April 14, milk production. Wednesday, April 19, agricultural outlook. Friday, April 21, livestock dairy and poultry; cattle on feed; livestock slaughter; agricultural trade update. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our NEWS LINE carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWS LINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on new Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman and Lynn Wyvill reports on food safety tips for handling Easter eggs.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Eric Parsons reports on 1995 wheat/feed grains loan rates.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crops and USDA economist Tom Capehart on U.S. agricultural trade.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Telstar 302, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHZ. Monday, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHZ.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.

Call Larry A. Quinn (202)720-6072 or write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

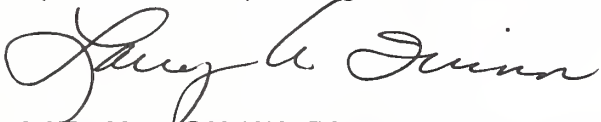
OFF MIKE

NEW RADIO CENTER...opens this weekend at USDA. Customized studio, control room and offices for our radio team of **Gary Crawford**, **Brenda Curtis-Heiken** and **Lori Spiczka Holm** will be operational next week. We'll maintain our daily newslines and continue weekly programs on schedule. Center is located adjacent to our TV studio in the South Agriculture Building.

TRIVIA WINNERS...got certificates for beef, pork and mid-Illinois farm products last week from WSMI-FM (Litchfield, IL). **Rita Frazer**, farm director, asked questions and listeners were rewarded for the right answers. Also, Rita did interviews with farmers and agribusinesses throughout February that she used in a special Farmers Appreciation Month campaign on her station. Eager farmers in her area already had started planting corn last week.

NEW FARM DIRECTOR...for WYRQ (Little Falls, MN) is **Sue Morrison**. She replaces **Kim Spiczka**. Sue is a broadcast journalism graduate from University of Wisconsin-River Falls where she was farm broadcaster for their college station. Sue and her husband also manage a farm with more than 200 sheep, beef and diversified crop (corn, soybean, wheat and barley) operation. Sue also used a trivia contest during Agriculture Week. She developed a series of 30-second agriculture vignettes which included answers to 27 trivia questions asked later in the day. Winners earned 108-slice packs of Wisconsin cheese. Listener response proved it was a good way to reach out to non-farm listeners.

SOUTH DAKOTA WINTER...ranked in the top 10 of mildest winters, reports **Jim Thoreson** (KWAT, Watertown, SD), but farmers are anxious about spring anyway and optimistic because of good carryover subsoil moisture from fall rains. Jim has a daily agricultural information hour from 11 a.m. to noon. "No-till" farming was a topic he was featuring last week because it's become quite popular in his area. Spring wheat planting should be halfway completed by mid-April, and corn planting will start in late April.



LARRY A. QUINN, Director
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center

Broadcasters Letter

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Room 1618-S
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